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AUTHOR Cicchelli, Terry; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This study describes dropout prevention strategies used by social service and school personnel in the Stay-In-School Partnership Project (SSPP), analyzes longitudinal statistical data generated by the 3-year program, and proposes a model for conceptualizing and implementing a dropout prevention program for at-risk minority students. SSPP is a university-school partnership project between Fordham University's Graduate Schools of Education and Social Services and five heavily minority New York City elementary schools serving 100 students and their parents. A pretest-posttest design was used to determine the effects of the program in the following areas: (1) absenteeism; (2) reading and mathematics achievement; (3) adequacy of child care; and (4) self-esteem. The following major results are reported: (1) absenteeism decreased by 60 percent; (2) analyses of reading and mathematics achievement were inconclusive due to incomplete and inadequate prior test data; (3) case managers perceived students as living in "neglectful" home conditions; and (4) self-esteem data show variability across sites. A practice profile of the project was developed from the comments of social service and educational staff comprising the following components: (1) assessment; (2) recordkeeping; (3) play therapy; (4) tutoring; (5) coordination; and (6) family problem-solving. SSPP staff observed significant program effects in parental involvement. Ten tables of statistical data and a copy of the practice profile developed by the SSPP are included. A list of 11 references is appended. (FMW)

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DROPOUT PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR URBAN CHILDREN AT-RISK: A LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS

Dr. Terry Cicchelli Dr. Richard E. Baecher Dr. Anthony Baratta

Division of Curriculum and Teaching
Graduate School of Education
Fordham University at Lincoln Center
113 W. 60th Street
New York, New York 10023

Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, Boston, MA, April, 1990.

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DROPOUT PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR URBAN CHILDREN AT-RISK:

A LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, researchers have devoted considerable effort in identifying the causes of dropping out among urban youth. This effort is aided by the growing use of alternative research strategies ranging from multivariate statistical modeling to ethnographic inquiries that can increase our understanding of this complex issue (Slavin & Madden, 1987; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Rumberger et al. (1988), for example, recently concluded that families exercise a powerful influence on the educational well-being of students, and recommended that schools work more closely with students' families. Recently Natriello et al. (1988) have developed a four-category typology of dropout prevention program which they claim identifies potentially effective approaches to prevention in each category, and examines the effectiveness of specific existing programs in each category. Our paper extends this body of information by describing and analyzing longitudinal data yielded from social and educational strategies of a dropout prevention program for urban minority children.

This university-school partnership project began in 1986 and has completed three years. Fordham University's Graduate Schools of Education and Social Services teamed up with three New York City public schools with a heavy population of minority students. Funded by the Bureau of Grants Administration of the New York State Department of Education (1), Fordham's Stay-In-School Partnerhsip Project (SSPP) has completed its third year of a longitudinal evaluation. We are excited about some of our findings, in particular, the nature and types of successful prevention strategies that we have been testing over the last three years for at-risk youth.

OBJECTIVES

Our paper has three main objectives: (1) to describe the successful dropout prevention strategies employed by social service and educational personnel; (2) to examine the longitudinal data yielded from attendance records, educational achievement in reading and math, global self esteem measures, adequacy of child care, and levels of social service; and (3) to propose a model for conceptualizing and implementing a dropout prevention program for at-risk minority children that goes beyond the Natriello et al. typology. Since five elementary schools are currently participating in SSPP, within- and across-site differences will be reported.

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We want to acknowledge the New York State Education Department for funding this project. A special thanks to Mary Amuge and Charles Graber of this department for their support.

PERSPECTIVE

This quote from An Imperiled Generation: Saving Urban Schools (Carnegie Foundation, 1988) captures the SSPP perspective: " Bold, aggressive action is needed now to avoid leaving a huge and growing segment of the nation's youth civically unprepared and economically unempowered. This nation must see the urban school crisis for what it is: a major failure of social policy, a piecemeal approach to a problem that requires a unified response." The "unified response" of our project combines three distinct frameworks: (1) focusing on preventive strategies instead of solely screening students for eligibility; (2) using effect size (ES) data as the metric to describe areas of greatest and weakest impact; and (3) identifying effective practices by formulating a "practice profile" that can be communicated with other researchers and practitioners. Together these frameworks are meant to help classroom teachers and school-based administrators, higher education staff (including social service and educational personnel), and state education officials to understand the context of the urban crisis and to bring about "bold, aggressive action."

METHODS

Our longitudinal evaluation design combines descriptive and analytical techniques. Our definition of at-risk children includes those who had more than 15 absences, failed to make adequate progress in school, achieved below their expected age-grade level, and who were likely to be retained in grade and/or referred to special educational services.

Five elementary schools in two large public school districts of East Harlem and the South Bronx have been partners in SSPP. One hundred children spanning grades K-5 and their parents are participating: 24 percent are black and 66 percent are hispanic (adding the element of limited-English proficiency). These children and their families receive a comprehensive set of coordinated services from social service staff (play therapy, counseling, advocacy, consultation, family problem-solving) and educational personnel (one-to-one tutoring using whole language approaches, individualized instruction, parental workshops). In addition, classroom teachers and building administrators receive in-service training on issues and practices related to at-risk prevention.

To appreciate the efforts at coordination between the Graduate Schools of Fordham University (Education and Social Services) and the New York City Public School District, the figure below identifies the "flow" of information and communication that transpired between and within these organizational units from 1986-89.

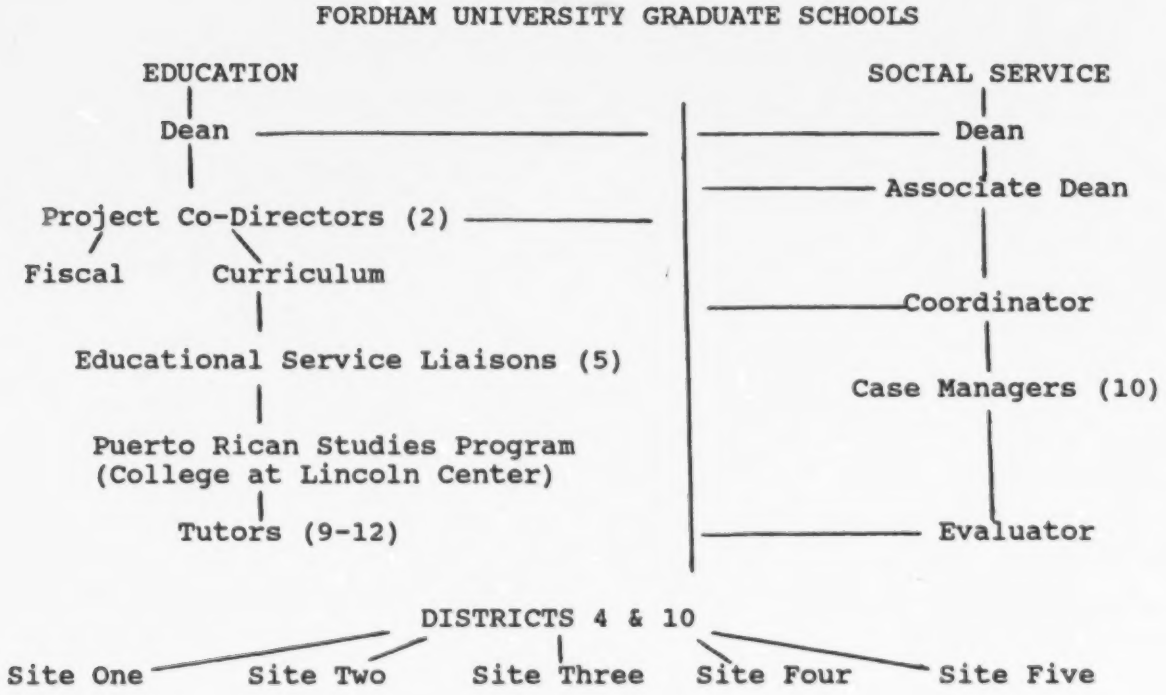

Figure 1. Organizational Chart of Stay-In-School Partnership Project: Fordham University & Districts 4 & 10, 1986-1988.

This chart identifies the key units within Fordham University and the district that were responsible for realizing the objectives of SSPP. Communication within Fordham and with district personnel were maintained by project coordinators and field personnel.

A pre/post test design using difference-score effect size data (ES) as the metric (Feltz et al., 1988) was used to ascertain the practical effects of the project in these areas: Absenteeism, educational achievement in reading and math, adequacy of child care, and self esteem. Project staff diligently collected these data at four intervals (December 1986; May 1987; May 1988; and May 1989), thereby providing a substantial database for comparative purposes. Other statistical data gauging the preventive strategies employed by social service and educational personnel within and across the five sites, and the impact of parental and staff training workshops were another essential part of the project.

DATA SOURCES

A combination of data sources were identified to monitor SSPP's impact. (The funding agency required data on absenteeism, educational achievement, and special education referrals as part of its evaluation design for all similar projects). Reliability of standardized instruments are indicated in parentheses.

Variable	Instrumentality	Date Collected
Attendance of Target Population	Attendance Lists	Yearly & monthly
Educational achievement	Kaufman K-TEA, Brief Form (reading & math) (.76-.84)	Spring to Spring Intervals
Adequacy of Child Care	Childhood Level of Living Scale (.64-.88)	Fall & Spring
Self Esteem	Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory (.87-.92)	Spring to Spring Intervals
Social Service Activities	Levels of Social Service Form	Daily & monthly
Tutoring	Logs & Educational Service Plan	Weekly
Special Education Referrals	List of referrals	Spring
Parental & Staff Training	Workshop Evaluation Questionnaires	After each workshop
Practice Profile of SSPP	Questionnaires & Interviews	Componential analysis after second year of project

Figure 2. Data Sources for Stay-In-School Partnership Project, 1986-89.

RESULTS

The major results of SSPP at the end of three years were as follows:

Absenteeism

In the three years of the project, overall absenteeism steadily decreased from a mean of 41 days in 1985-6 to 25 days at the end of 1989, an impressive decrease of 60%. While individual sites varied from year to year, SSPP accomplished one of its major goals--to reverse the negative effects of not attending school. A similar finding occurred in District 10 which joined the project in 1988.

Table 1 reports mean number of absences for each year of SSPP within and across all sites. The base year is indicated for comparative purposes.

Table 1. Mean Absences for SSPP Sites, 1986--1989.

	YEAR OF PROJECT			
SITE	1985-86[a] (Base Year)	1986-87 (Year One)	1987-88 (Year Two)	1988-89 (Year Three)
DISTRICT 4:				
PS 96	38.9	36.9	37.2	25.8
PS 101	44.6	43.4	38.7	23.6
PS 121	39.9	48.3	39.5	26.2
TOTAL	41.1 (54)[b]	42.8 (59)	38.4 (54)	25.2 (36)
DISTRICT 10:			(Base Year)	(Year One)
PS 46	not applicable		53.9	46.1
PS 85	not applicable		50.8	49.7
TOTAL			52.3 (40)	48.0 (40)

[a] Mean absences of 1985-86 school year were used as base figure for SSPP in District 4; mean absences of 1987-88 school year were used as base figure for District 10.

[b] Number of participants for which absences were reported.

Effect sizes (ES), reported in Table 2, are to be interpreted as an appropriate metric (Feltz et al., 1988) for judging the practical significance of any changes in a set of data over a period of time, such as, reduction of absenteeism, gains in academic achievement, and increases in self-esteem. Light & Pillemer (1984) state that "effect sizes provide simple but useful estimates of how valuable a treatment really is" (pp.55-57).

Table 2. Corresponding Effect Size[a] Data for SSPP Sites, 1986--1989.

SITE	YEAR OF PROJECT 1986-87 (Year One)	1987-88 (Year Two)	1988-89 (Year Three)
DISTRICT 4:			
PS 96	-.08	-.06	+.44
PS 101	-.08	+.68	-.09
PS 121	+.42	+.56	-.30
TOTAL	+.09	+.44	-.05
DISTRICT 10:			(Year One)
PS 46	not applicable		+.41
PS 85	not applicable		+.04
TOTAL			+.20

[a] Effect sizes (ES) are reported individually for each year of the project. ES provides additional substance and useful information in an evaluation analysis as it may be interpreted as follows:

.20=small effect size;.50=moderate effect size;.80=large effect size.

(This interpretation is suggested by J. Cohen in Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences, Academic Press (1977).)

Computation of ES used pooled standard deviations.

These data are very encouraging: Effect sizes demonstrate how much absenteeism was reduced at each site. A small to moderate ES occurred across all sites in District 4 in the first two years of the project. In District 10, a small effect size was evident. When one considers the nature and mobility of the target populations and different grade levels (K-5) that were serviced by social service interns and tutors, these results are very positive.

One major reason for increased attendance is due to the levels of social service form that each case manager completed for each client. This form records the type and nature of contact for each child and family in the project, e.g., individual/group contact, family, school personnel, outside agencies, workshops, telephone. As an illustration of this property of SSPP, Table 3 summarizes the total number of contacts for District 4 sites between September and May of year three of the project. Frequency data are reported for each category.

Table 3. Distribution of Levels of Social Service Categories for SSPP Sites, September 1988-May 1989.

LEVEL OF SERVICE	PS 96	PS 101	PS 121
Individual/Group	313	460	347
Family	129	159	108
School Personnel	227	340	225
Agencies	63	67	52
Telephone	394	409	348

These distributions capture the types and extent to which social service interns made contacts for parents and their children during the second year of the project. (It should be pointed out that telephones were not available at one site except for one in the teacher's room; space in which to conduct individual/group meetings was also inadequate). Results of the application of chi-square contingency analyses yielded significant differences among all categories (chi square=19.81; p=.011) across the sites, most likely due to the differences in working conditions at each site, and due to the two distinct subgroups of target children (one that had been in the project since 1986, and another one that was entirely new to the project.)

Educational Achievement

Table 4 summarizes SSPP reading performance from 1985-1989. The reader is cautioned in making any definite conclusions from these data for various reasons. Due to incomplete and inadequate prior reading test data in the cumulative record folders of the target population along with the different tests required by the New York City Board of Education, it was decided to use standardized achievement measures (Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement) for diagnostic and achievement purposes. Achievement data were collected at four points in time. The first testing was completed by the end of December, 1985 to establish prior achievement scores for the first year of the project; the second testing occurred in May 1986 for the posttest. The other testing intervals were May 1987, 1988, and 1989, respectively. It should be pointed out that after the first year of the project, some students moved to other districts or into other programs, and new students were added to the project. Mean normal curve equivalents (NCE) are reported because of their test features for comparative purposes.

Table 4. Mean NCE Reading Performance[a] for SSPP Participants, 1985-89.

SITE	TIME OF TESTING 12/85	5/86	5/87	5/88	5/89
DISTRICT 4:					
PS 96	43.2 (14)[b]	39.9 (18)	40.9 (12)	10.6 (16)	25.0 (16)
PS 101	35.3 (18)	37.0 (16)	32.2 (24)	29.2 (26)	30.1 (26)
PS 121	28.8 (15)	31.3 (12)	24.5 (16)	19.0 (17)	25.2 (17)
TOTAL	36.2 (42)	36.3 (51)	31.7 (51)	21.2 (59)	27.3 (59)
DISTRICT 10:					
PS 46	not applicable			24.4 (19)	25.0 (19)
PS 85	not applicable			19.4 (21)	25.3 (21)
TOTAL				21.8 (40)	25.2 (40)

[a] Appropriate grade levels of the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (K-TEA, Brief Form) were used.

[b] Number of participants for which scores were available in parentheses.

Although wide variability in reading scores is evident for each site, an upward trend can be noted for District 4 in the last two years of the project (a gain of 6 NCEs). For District 10, an increase of 4 NCEs resulted after the first year of the project. Given the limited opportunity for tutoring for each child--40 minutes per week--and the difficulties experienced by staff in obtaining tutors for each site during the last three years of the project, these NCE gains in reading are evidence of the impact of the project in this area.

The following table reports specific comparisons relevant to the evaluation of reading performance. Effect sizes are reported.

Table 5. Effect Sizes[a] of Pre/Post Reading Performance for SSPP Sites, 1985-1989.[b]

SITE	YEAR OF PROJECT 1986-87 (Year One)	1987-88 (Year Two)	1988-89 (Year Three)
DISTRICT 4:			
PS 96	-.01	+.13	+.67
PS 101	+.09	-.11	+.04
PS 121	+.12	-.14	+.33
TOTAL	+.005	-.08	+.28
DISTRICT 10:			(Year One)
PS 46	not applicable		+.21
PS 85	not applicable		+.41
TOTAL			+.21

[a] Effect size provides additional substance, and useful information in an evaluation analysis as it may be interpreted as follows:

.20=small effect size;.50=moderate effect size;.80=large effect size.

This interpretation is suggested by J. Cohen in Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences, Academic Press (1977).

Computation of ES used pretest standard deviations.

[b] Mean NCE scores of Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement are reported.

Although the tutoring component of project SSPP was designed to supplement the regular education program in each school, these data are be useful in monitoring the reading progress of project pupils at each site. The ES results are encouraging: Moderate and high effects were evident at two of the five sites. Overall, the ES data indicate a positive, although small, impact on reading performance.

Given that math performance was never a formally-stated objective in the original proposal, diagnostic information from testing and teacher recommendations made math tutoring another compensatory activity of the project. Similar data collection procedures were used as for reading. Again the reader is cautioned in making any definite conclusions from these data for various reasons similar to those described for reading. Effect sizes are summarized in the following table. NCEs are reported. Table 6 summarizes SSPP math performance from 1985-89.

Table 6. Mean NCE Reading Performance for SSPP Participants[a], 1985-89.

	TIME OF TESTING				
SITE	12/85	5/86	5/87	5/88	5/89
DISTRICT 4:					
PS 96	32.1 (18)[b]	33.2 (14)	31.0 (11)	10.6 (16)	25.3 (16)
PS 101	44.3 (18)	40.9 (16)	35.0 (24)	34.5 (26)	40.2 (26)
PS 121	42.9 (15)	39.9 (12)	45.0 (16)	32.3 (16)	40.9 (16)
TOTAL	39.5 (51)	38.0 (42)	39.1 (51)	27.1 (58)	36.3 (58)
DISTRICT 10:					(Year One)
PS 46	not applicable			31.1 (19)	44.4 (20)
PS 85	not applicable			31.1 (21)	50.4 (21)
TOTAL				31.1 (40)	47.6 (40)

[a] Appropriate grade levels of the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (K-TEA, Brief Form) were used.

[b] Number of participants for which scores were available in parentheses.

These descriptive data indicate wide variations in pre- and posttest NCE math scores. Some NCE gains were made, in particular, the last two year for District 4 and the first year for District 10. The reader, however, is cautioned in making any firm conclusions from these data. Student attrition, new entrants, and limited tutoring opportunities in math characterized this component of the project.

The following table reports specific comparisons relevant to the evaluation of reading performance. Effect sizes are reported.

Table 7. Effect Sizes of Pre/Post Math Performance for SSPP Sites, 1985-1989.[a] [b]

SITE	YEAR OF PROJECT 1986-87 (Year One)	1987-88 (Year Two)	1988-89 (Year Three)
DISTRICT 4:			
PS 96	+.04	-.06	+.63
PS 101	-.15	-.19	+.25
PS 121	-.14	+.48	+.26
TOTAL	-.09	+.25	+.32
DISTRICT 10:			(Year One)
PS 46	not applicable		+.86
PS 85	not applicable		+1.0
TOTAL			+.95

[a] Effect size provides additional substance, and useful information in an evaluation analysis as it may be interpreted as follows:

.20=small effect size;.50=moderate effect size;.80=large effect size.

This interpretation is suggested by J. Cohen in Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences, Academic Press (1977).

Computation of ES used pretest standard deviations.

[b] Mean NCE scores of Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement are reported.

These ES data indicate a positive trend in math performance across all sites with District 4 making a small to moderate gain and District 10 having a high impact.

Adequacy of Child Care Conditions

An important feature of SSPP was to determine the adequacy of childhood living conditions. Table 8 summarizes the results of the Childhood Level of Living Scale (CLLs), a measure that yields information on the adequacy of child care. According to Polansky et al. (1978), this instrument contains two major parts: Part A--Physical Care, dealing with basic issues of food, clothing, shelter, safety, health care; and Part B--Emotional/Cognitive Care, having to do with providing growth experiences and emotional support. Case manager interns, under the supervision of the social service coordinator, completed this rating scale for each target child during each year of the project. A similar pre/posttest design was used. (It should be pointed out that different groups of case-manager interns completed the CLL scale in each year of the project). Mean raw scores are reported. Only District 4 data are included.

Table 7. Mean Raw Scores of Childhood Level of Living Scale[a] (CLLs) for SSPP Participants, 1986-89.

SITE	TIME OF COMPLETION OF CLLs				
	12/85	5/86	5/87	5/88	5/89
DISTRICT 4:					
PS 96	49.7 (7)[b]	54.9 (18)	42.7 (16)	54.3 (18)	55.3 (18)
PS 101	59.4 (12)	58.6 (19)	51.2 (24)	47.0 (26)	58.9 (26)
PS 121	51.8 (15)	58.7 (18)	45.2 (19)	47.7 (15)	60.4 (15)
TOTAL	54.1 (34)	57.4 (55)	47.0 (59)	49.4 (59)	58.2 (59)

[a] The Childhood Level of Living Scale (CLLS) was devised to assess the level of neglect or deprivation that exists in the home environment. Neglect is defined as "a condition in which a caretaker responsible for a child either deliberately or by extraordinary inattentiveness permits the child to experience avoidable present suffering and fails to provide one or more of the ingredients generally deemed essential for developing a person's physical, intellectual and emotional capabilities" (Polansky et al., 1978). Scores can be interpreted according to the following categories:

Seriously Neglectful	0 - 47	(20th percentile)
Neglectful	48 - 62	(40th percentile)
Marginal Child Care	63 - 76	(50th percentile)
Acceptable Child Care	77 - 87	(80th percentile)
Good Child Care	80 - 99	(100th percentile)

[b] Number of participants with available scores are in parentheses.

These descriptive data, yielded from the CLLs, indicate that the case-managers in general perceived the home condition of at-risk children as falling within the category of "neglectful." Pre/post scores within all SSPP sites, except District 10, confirm this conclusion. This finding, then, of "neglectful" home care continued to be a consistent trend across all sites and must be considered in reaching any conclusions about the impact of this project on at-risk pupils.

Self Esteem

Since self concept was considered one of the major goals of SSPP, self esteem data were collected from 1987-89. It was reasoned that student perceptions of how they felt about themselves in social, family, and personal areas of experience could be useful in coordinating the efforts of the social service and educational components, respectively. Tutoring and play therapy being the two basic modes of direct student service in each component, increased awareness of each student's level of self esteem might be helpful in improving each component. Within this context, the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory (SEI) (School Form) was administered to determine the evaluation a person makes about him- or herself, i.e., "overall self-esteem is an expression of approval or disapproval, indicating the extent to which a person believes him- or herself competent, successful, significant, and worthy" (Coopersmith, 1986, pp.1-2). Sample items from this checklist included: "Things usually don't bother me;" "I get upset easily at home;" "I'm popular with kids my own age;" "I often get discouraged at school." (Case managers adapted the SEI for children in grades 1 and 2). Table 8 summarizes the mean raw score results of the SEI administration for each site.

Table 8. Mean Raw Scores of Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory for SSPP Participants, 1987-89.

SITE	1987-88	1988-89
DISTRICT 4:		
PS 96	53.8 (13)[a]	63.4 (15)
PS 101	44.4 (18)	58.8 (27)
PS 121	48.2 (17)	47.2 (17)
TOTAL	48.5 (48)	56.6 (59)
DISTRICT 10:		
PS 46		38.5 (19)

[a] Number of pupils in parentheses.

These self esteem data show variability across all sites. If scores on the SEI between 26-74 (interquartile range) are viewed as indicative of "medium self esteem," then, in general, the majority of score types fall within this category (the lower quartile being indicative of "low self esteem" and the uppper quartile designated as "high self esteem"). These findings can be used as a base on which to improve the social service and tutoring components of the project in the future.

Special Education Referrals

In addition to these findings on absenteeism, reading and math performance, Childhood Level of Living Scale, and self esteem, the results for special education referrals are very positive. Table 9 reports the number of target children who were referred to special education at the end of each year of SSPP.

Table 9. Special Education Referrals for SSPP, 1986-1989.

Year	Special Education Referrals	Percentage
1986-7	2	3% (61)[a]
1987-8	1	1% (62)
1988-9	2	2% (100)

[a] Number of participants in project.

These data indicate a very low referral rate to special education from 1986 to 1989.

Practice Profile of SSPP

A practice profile consisting of six components (assessment, record-keeping, play therapy, tutoring, coordination, family problem-solving) was identified by social service and educational staff of SSPP.

This practice profile attempts to specify Fordham's Stay-In-School Partnerhsip Project by using an adaptation of the practice profile method of Loucks and Crandall (1982). Briefly the practice profile is an all-purpose tool that can "provide a standardized, systematic, cost-effective way to summarize program components and requirements" (p.1). One aim of this tool is to facilitate communication among users, evaluators, and potential adopters of innovative practices. Since many of the current state-funded projects claim to be innovative in responding to at-risk populations and include various descriptions about goals, philosophy, and approaches, it was only reasonable to apply the practice profile concept to Fordham's project. In addition to on-site observations, this entailed a critical analysis of documents (proposals, manuals, forms, etc.) and interviews with project personnel who were responsible for implementing the educational and social service goals of the project. Examination of these data yielded from observations of actual practices, content analysis of documents, and responses to open-ended questionnaires resulted in the following practice profile (Figure 2) of SSPP. ("Components" are the major operational features or parts of the profile.)

IDEAL	ACCEPTABLE	UNACCEPTABLE
Component 1: Assessment (1) Participants are assessed individually with combination of tests, teacher judgment, inventories, & interviews.	(2) Participants are assessed individually using teacher judgment only.	(3) Participants are not assessed individually.
Component 2: Record-Keeping (1) Individual record forms are kept up-to-date for counseling & tutoring.	(2) Individual record forms are not kept up-to-date for counseling & tutoring.	(3) No individual records are kept at all.
Component 3: Play-Therapy (1) Participants receive play therapy for 45 minutes once per week. Each session is equally divided between participants.	(2) Participants receive play therapy for 45 minutes once per week. Time for each participant and each activity varies slightly when necessary.	(3) Participants do not receive play therapy for 45 minutes per week, or time for each child and each activity varies markedly or is not considered.

CODE: _____Variations to the right are unacceptable; variations to the left are acceptable.

--------Variations to the left are ideal, as determined by developers.

Figure 2. Practice Profile of Fordham--Districts 4 & 10 Stay-In-School Partnership Project, 1986-1989.

IDEAL	ACCEPTABLE	UNACCEPTABLE
Component 4: Tutoring		
(1) Students receive one-to-tutoring for 40 minutes each week. Activities are based on performance contract cooperatively decided on by classroom teacher & educational service liason (ESL).	(2) Students receive one-to-tutoring for 40 minutes each week. Activities are not based on performance contract.	(3) Students do not receive one-to-one tutoring for 40 minutes per week.
Component 5: Coordination		
(1) Articulation & consultation are maintained among SSPP team and school staff (principal, classroom teachers) at frequent intervals.	(2) Articulation & consultation are not maintained among SSPP team and school staff (principal, classroom teachers) at frequent intervals.	
Component 6: Family Problem-Solving		
(1) Families with at-risk children are taught strategies & skills to solve problems through counseling and other supportive means.	(2) Families with at-risk children are not taught strategies & skills to solve problems through counseling and other supportive means.	

CODE: _____Variations to the right are unacceptable; variations to the left are acceptable.

--------Variations to the left are ideal, as determined by developers.

Figure 2. Practice Profile of Fordham--Districts 4 & 10 Stay-In-School Partnership Project, 1986-1989.

Parental Involvement

In the opinion of some SSPP staff, one of the most significant effects of the project occurred in parental involvement.

Through the combined efforts of social service and educational staff, a majority of parents became more aware of and involved in ways to solve their social and school-related concerns. This was partly due to the formal workshops that were conducted by Fordham professors on parental concerns (e.g., relating to school, child behaviors, etc.) and the accompanying increase in parental attendance.

In addition, weekly levels of service as recorded by social service interns indicated a variety of contacts in such areas as: (1) individual/group; (2) family; (3) school personnel; (4) agencies; and (5) telephone use. This levels of social service function were summarized in table 3. The majority of parents made use of services related to housing, social security, public assistance, day care, legal issues, after school care, substance abuse, medical and psychological, and speech, hearing and visual disorders.

Two training manuals--one to orient tutors in structuring tutoring activities and another to orient parents in various topics on child care--were developed in the first two years of the project.

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF SSPP

In this paper we described the results of Fordham's Stay-In-School Partnership Project with two New York City public school districts in the hope that they can contribute to a better understanding of the complex issues confronting at-risk children and school personnel. Data about absenteeism, educational achievement, child care conditions, self esteem, levels of social service, and parental involvement were presented. In particular, the preventive strategies and effective practices of SSPP identified in this paper can benefit others who are taking similar "aggressive action" to bring about positive change in urban schools for these children and their families. The Stay-In-School-Partnership Project, initiated by the New York State Department of Education in 1986 to involve university resources, is one program that seeks to reduce children's risk of failure by following this principle: "there must be a joint effort by the schools and other social institutions to ameliorate the lives of these children" (Commissioner's Task Force,p.3). Fordham's partnership project contributed to this state-wide effort, and continues to do so for 1990-91, the fourth year of the project.

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